



City of
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City Strategic Plan

downtown



Downtown Focus Area

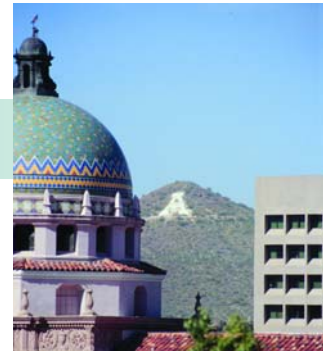
Introduction:

Tucson is at a crossroads with respect to the future of its downtown, the core of our metropolitan region. Tucsonans face a choice of living in a good city with a downtown of no particular note or in a great city known for its world-class downtown.

Tucson's downtown would:

- be full of life beyond the weekday hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., teeming with new residents craving an exciting urban lifestyle
- be frequented by visitors and Tucsonans alike, eager to enjoy the experiences of a variety of cultural, artistic, retail, and entertainment venues
- celebrate the rich history and traditions of Tucson through the built environment, while respecting and enhancing the natural environment

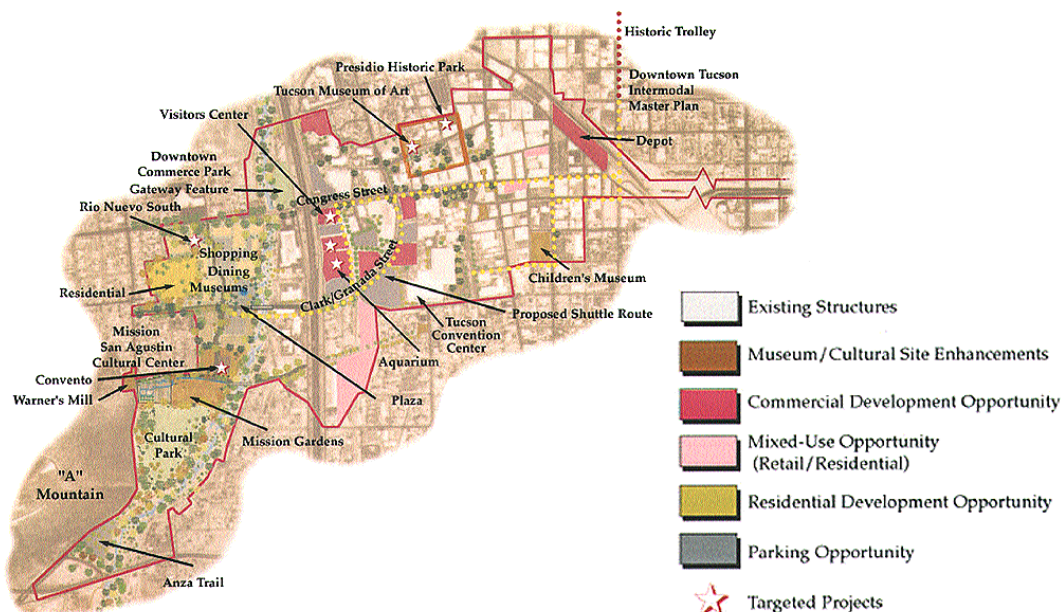
This vibrant vision of downtown Tucson can be realized, but it requires more than just the implementation of the Rio Nuevo Master Plan. The tax increment financing for the Rio Nuevo Project has been secured, and funding is likely to be initiated from the State Department of Revenue during FY 2003. As recently outlined by the facilitators of the downtown summit held in January 2002, it is the "100 little things" that must be attended to that make the difference between a great downtown and a good downtown. However, this downtown revitalization effort must be a focused endeavor, accomplished through the implementation of prioritized projects. Sustained progress to complete the priority projects and the accomplishment of the "100 little things" on a daily basis will be the engines that drive downtown development to the next level.



Strategic Policy Statements:

1. Aggressively manage downtown's redevelopment through partnering efforts with public and private organizations and individuals active in the downtown.
2. Provide a highly "amenitized" urban center focused on the proposed entertainment experience area on Congress Street from Church Avenue to 4th Avenue, linked with the Tucson Convention Center and its adjoining proposed new Civic Plaza.
3. Leverage private leadership and investment in downtown through targeted public investment.

Rio Nuevo



Strategic Policy Statements

1. Aggressively manage downtown's redevelopment through partnering efforts with public and private organizations and individuals active in the downtown.

• Priority Projects:

-Establish specific downtown project staff from individual City departments and complement the existing Rio Nuevo Office staff to enhance and accelerate delivery of projects and resources to the downtown. Co-locate City and Rio Nuevo downtown development staff with Rio Nuevo Design Studio (University of Arizona) in the core area, and complete a street-front "sales office" for downtown.

-Forge a partnership with existing outside agencies such as the Tucson Downtown Alliance and the Tucson Arts District Partnership, and the retooled public sector forces, to collaborate on marketing, public relations and event management in downtown.

-Pursue co-location of appropriate outside agency offices with newly consolidated City and Rio Nuevo functions to foster further collaboration.

-Form a broad and effective management structure that provides organization, focus, responsibility, and accountability toward the efforts of the various agencies engaged in downtown redevelopment efforts.

-Implement Tucson's version of the New Jersey Rehabilitation Code as a downtown pilot program.

-Streamline permitting process for downtown projects; consider creating special development review team for downtown.

-Complete development of, and implement, urban design guidelines that regulate new development and redevelopment in the downtown core.

-Consider implementation of taxing strategies in downtown that create an incentive for active occupancy of currently vacant and/or neglected properties.

-Implement investigation of level of available philanthropic funds for downtown projects.

Lead effort to coordinate fundraising programs, appropriately phasing appeals to match project timing, market feasibility, and special project affinities.

• Rio Nuevo Project (certain elements, as follows)

-Regional Visitors Center (RVC) – To be located near the west bank of the Santa Cruz River near Congress Street, the RVC would provide visitors to the area with an orientation to all that Southern Arizona has to offer, with a particular emphasis on cultural

and entertainment venues in downtown Tucson. Interactive displays of attractions, restaurant and restroom facilities, and visitor information would be available at the RVC. The design and program elements would be developed by a collaborative consisting of the Metropolitan Tucson Convention and Visitor's Bureau, National Park Service, City of Tucson, Rio Nuevo Office, Bureau of Land Management, Southern Arizona Attractions Alliance, and many others. Design will begin this calendar year.

• Sales of Public Land for Private Residential Development - Platting, planning, and infrastructure development will include two main components: 1) the vacant City-owned acreage bounded by the Santa Cruz River, Congress Street, Clearwater Street, and the eastern edge of Menlo Park Neighborhood; 2) the 10 acres bounded by Interstate 10, Congress Street, Clark/Granada, and the rail spur line. Both areas will be completed this calendar year.

• Tucson Origins Park – This year will see continued archaeological investigations in the downtown core and west of the Santa Cruz River, with regular collaboration with educational institutions to provide learning opportunities for all ages. That will be followed by development of an interpretive plan that will be used to guide construction of the Convento complex and development of the Presidio Museum site, ensuring a high degree of historical accuracy.

• Conveyance of Warehouse District Assets to City – Nearly two dozen warehouse district properties will be conveyed to the City of Tucson by the Arizona Department of Transportation for interim artist-based uses prior to the construction of the Barraza-Aviation Parkway. This management project for the City will be a major interdepartmental cooperative venture also involving the Tucson Downtown Alliance (TDA), Tucson Arts District Partnership (TADP), and the affected occupants of the various properties, most of whom are in the arts or cultural field.

• Intermodal Center Master Plan

(certain elements, as follows)

- Responses to City's Request for Proposals for redevelopment of the City Hall Annex site were reviewed in February 2002, and demolition will begin this calendar year. This will be a public/private joint venture, providing a multi-level parking structure of at least 400 spaces over first floor retail at Scott and Pennington.

-The shelter over Locomotive 1673 at the Depot will be completed this summer, a collaborative effort of the Locomotive 1673 Task Force.

-Construction on the Depot's complex and three remaining out-buildings will begin this spring, with completion of the restoration slated for 2004. More than 15,000 square feet of commercial space will be offered to the private sector as a leasing opportunity as a result of this project.

-Name The Depot contest will engage the community in creating a designation for the facility this summer.

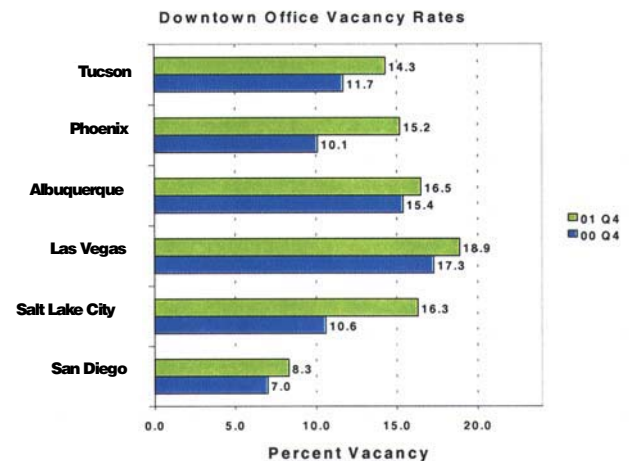
- **Barraza-Aviation Parkway** (4th Avenue underpass element) – Construction of the new 4th Avenue underpass and restoration of the historic underpass will begin this calendar year. The Greyhound Bus terminal (located in the future path of this project) will be acquired this spring.

- **Downtown Signage** – A system will be implemented this year that simplifies locating key venues and government facilities in downtown. This system will be flexible, allowing for expansion of the area covered by the system, as well as the addition of new venues within the downtown resulting from the Rio Nuevo Project. This system was developed through the use of a citizen task force composed of representatives from the TDA, the Rio Nuevo Citizen's Advisory Committee, and other groups.

- **University of Arizona Collaboration** – Seek out new ways to work with the University of Arizona in meeting its needs through initiation of targeted graduate housing projects in the downtown area, and in locating educational facilities downtown to serve demand for after-hours graduate and post-graduate schooling of downtown employee base.

- **Mixed-Use Housing El Presidio Block 175** – Development projects include Block 175 in El Presidio at the southwest corner of Franklin and Church. Negotiations with the majority owners of this large surface parking lot, the Downtown Development Corporation (DDC), continue. A request for proposals for a housing development, issued by the DDC, would be a preferred outcome within the next 18 months.

2. Provide a highly "amenitized" urban center focused on the proposed entertainment experience area on Congress Street from Church Avenue to 4th Avenue, linked with the Tucson Convention Center and its adjoining proposed new Civic Plaza.



Priority Projects

- **100 Little Things** – Begin making physical improvements to a targeted area on Congress Street, step up the downtown "Clean & Safe" activities, engage the private sector through development incentives, and increase downtown's profile community wide.

- **Rio Nuevo Project** (certain elements, as follows):

- **Fox Theatre Restoration** – Development of an agreement between the Foundation and the Rio Nuevo District is expected this calendar year. The Fox Tucson Theatre Foundation recently received a federal grant of \$1 million, to be expended toward the redevelopment effort this calendar year.

- **Rialto Theatre Restoration** – The Rialto, an operating venue on Congress near 4th Avenue, is completing a restructuring of their debt this spring. This will enable them to approach the Rio Nuevo District with a restoration project and business plan during the coming months for consideration and may also lead to a development agreement this year.

- **GSA/Thrifty Block** – Negotiations with the General Services Administration (GSA) are proceeding smoothly, with the expectation of a sales agreement between the GSA and the Rio Nuevo District this spring. A redevelopment Request for Proposals will be issued later this calendar year, seeking construction of first floor retail/commercial space and multi-story residential units.

- ♦ The downtown area represented only 0.5% of all dwelling unit construction in the metro area over the past six years.
- ♦ To achieve the Rio Nuevo Project's stated goal of 2,000 new downtown dwelling units in the next 10 years, downtown's housing construction rate must increase by over 500%.
- ♦ In the past several years, the annual office space absorption rate in the downtown area was 20,000 square feet per year. In 2000 and 2001, the absorption rate increased to nearly 80,000 square feet per year. This indicates renewed demand for office space in the downtown area.

-Mixed-Use Housing – Discussions with potential downtown residential developers have included private market-rate condos or apartments and other options.

• **Tucson Convention Center Improvements** – Enhance the customer experience at the TCC through relocating the Box Office to face Church Avenue, upgrading the lighting and sound equipment in the Arena, and replacing carpeting in the Grand Lobby area. As the "primary component" of the Rio Nuevo Project, by law, the first construction effort must take place at the TCC.

• **Civic Plaza Area** – Create a plaza or "town hall" for special community events. This area would be framed by the TCC on the east, large attractions on the west, a mixed use parking facility on the north, and retail establishments on the south. Responses to a Request for Proposals were reviewed on the aquarium project, and negotiations to secure a Science Center will likely result in an Intergovernmental Agreement with the State of Arizona during this calendar year to facilitate the replacement of the University of Arizona's Flandrau Planetarium with this new venue in downtown.

• **Mayor's Back to Basics** - This program has allocated \$1.6 million toward restoration and rehabilitation efforts in the downtown area in the last two years. Within the entertainment experience area, it has funded one residential rehabilitation (under construction), two theatre marquees (to be completed in Fiscal Year 2002), one roof repair (completed), two special events, one hotel façade renovation (under construction), and is partially funding the TCC Box Office construction project.

3. Encourage private leadership and investment in downtown through targeted public investment.

Priority Projects

• **Rio Nuevo Project** (certain elements, as follows):

-**Parking Facilities** – An infusion of limited public funds may leverage a new multi-use parking garage immediately southwest of the Evo DeConcini Federal Courthouse. Additionally, future parking facility construction shall be addressed through a tiered approach.

-**Plaza San Agustín Development** - An infusion of public funds toward the creation of a public plaza opposite St. Augustine's Cathedral on South Stone Avenue may leverage a mixed-use housing project.

-**Lot 7, El Presidio Development** – An infusion of public funds toward parking, gallery, and/or administrative space for the Tucson Museum of Art may leverage a mixed-use housing project northeast of the Tucson Water Department Building.

-**Conversion of One-Way Streets to Two-Way Streets** – Where possible, convert existing one-way streets to two-way. Two-way streets are more marketable for retail use, are more pedestrian-friendly, act to calm traffic, and would stimulate further private sector investment in downtown, while providing the public with more accessibility.

• **Tucson Downtown Alliance (TDA) Annual Workplan** - Presented to Mayor and Council this spring, the TDA workplan will outline the vision of several committees engaged in specific tasks related to downtown management and development over the past year. Focusing on the three main functions of the TDA – making downtown clean, keeping downtown safe, and marketing downtown to others, this workplan must be a vehicle to stimulate further private investment in downtown.

• **Greater Santa Rosa HOPE 6 Development**

- The Santa Rosa Neighborhood Center will be expanded to provide area residents more opportunities for human services and interpersonal connections.

-**The residential development along South 10th Avenue known as Posadas Sentinel** is nearly completed. Significant private sector investment in rehabilitation and new construction is taking hold in Barrio Viejo, much of it leveraged through the HOPE 6 public investment of over \$14 million.

-**The Grocery Store Project** proposed for the northeast corner of 22nd Street and Interstate 10 may yield as much as a five to one return of private investment on the City's \$2.5 million public investment.

• **Rio Nuevo Environs Project** – This effort involves engaging the neighbors surrounding downtown in a positive dialogue focused on mitigation of potential impacts from Rio Nuevo. Success in this regard will substantially reduce the risks perceived by residential, commercial, and entertainment developers, facilitating their investment in downtown projects.

• **Stimulation of Private Investment** - City staff will engage the private sector in individual and group meetings to fully inform them of the development opportunities contained within Rio Nuevo. These efforts will be followed by group discussions exploring the creation of development incentives that eliminate barriers to private investment in downtown today.